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CONFIDENTIAL

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PRC/TAIWAN: TACTICAL SHIFT

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Beijing will make public within the next couple of months a proposal to hold talks with Taipei through national reunification councils of the two sides, according to the *Far Eastern Economic Review*.

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The PRC proposal – a departure from previous insistence on party-to-party talks – was originally to have been made by Communist party leader Jiang Zemin in a New Year's statement but was postponed at the last minute. Reacting to the story, Beijing said there had been no change in policy; Taipei reiterated it would hold talks on reunification only if Beijing pledged never to use force, stopped isolating the island, and recognized Taiwan as a legitimate political entity.

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